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December 2000 Annual Study of Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Division of Special Education

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Questions regarding this study may be directed to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education, 573-751-5739.

I. Preface

The 2000 Study of Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance is the most recent in a series of annual studies on this topic. The 1999 study is available on the World Wide Web site of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Division of Special Education and within the House Bill 401 web page (/divspeced/). Copies of the 1998 study are available from the Division of Special Education.

Readers will note that this study varies in some portions of its content with the prior study available on the web, as well as others that were done prior to 1999. The current year's study reflects an effort to begin to report and format key information in a longitudinal perspective so readers may easily discern changes which appear to be occurring in the indicators reported, e.g, number of eligible students, achievement, graduation, etc. It is the intent of the Division to continue to increase the reporting of relevant indicators and to report them in a manner that will permit readers to ascertain changes over time.

The Department would like to thank members of the Task Force on Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance for their review and advice on the report, school district personnel and others throughout Missouri who provided data for the American Printing House Blind Registry (APH) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Childcount of Students with Disabilities (reported as DESE Core Data), and finally, Ms. Wanda McPherson who assembled the information for this report and did the technical writing.

II. Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is mandated by Section 162.1136, RSMo to provide the Missouri Legislature with an annual report on December 1 detailing the educational status of eligible students with visual impairments (SVI). Missouri statutes define the content that must be reported in the annual study regarding eligible

students. Eligible students are defined as “any blind or visually-impaired child, including any student who has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with conventional correction, or has a limited field of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance not greater than twenty degrees, and who is eligible for special education services for the visually-impaired as defined in the department of elementary and secondary education state plan.” The interpretation of this statutory definition is that “eligible students” refers to those who are blind and does not include those who are partially sighted. The findings presented in the 2000 Study of Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance will be used for reflection and policy development regarding services for SVI.

III. Procedures and Methodology

Missouri statutes specify what information, as a minimum, is to be included in the annual report. There were two categories of data for which collection procedures were still being developed at the time of this study including, students receiving Braille materials and related services and students using slate and stylus or other Braille writing devices. In the future, these data elements are expected to be collected via the APH Registry.

Information for this report was assembled from the following sources by the technical writer.

- ▶ Student and teacher data are reported by public schools throughout Missouri each year and are maintained by DESE. This source is referred to as “Core Data”. It contains a count of students by primary disability (this count is required by IDEA), certificated teachers, etc.
- ▶ The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) is a statewide achievement testing program in which all districts participate. Students in select grades are tested each year in the areas of math, science, communication arts, social studies, fine arts and health and physical education.
- ▶ The American Printing House for the Blind, in collaboration with the Missouri School for the Blind (MSB), conducts an annual count of blind persons of any age who are enrolled in organized education programs below college level. This count does not require that blindness be the primary disability or that the student be identified as disabled according to IDEA. There exists a considerable difference between the count of students using this source when compared with the IDEA childcount.
- ▶ The Missouri Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) collects information on the number of blind students to whom it provides a variety of services.

IV. Technical Analysis

A. Students by Level of Vision

The December 1, 1999 IDEA child count reported 229 blind students and 196 students who were partially sighted, between the ages of 5 and 21 and for whom a visual impairment was the primary disability. Table 1 reflects the number of blind and partially sighted students by age cohorts, level of vision, and type of school in which educational services were provided during the 1997-98, 1998-99, and 1999-2000 school years. The type of school is defined as public (PS), private/parochial/home school (P/P/H), and MSB.

Table 1. Students with Visual Impairments by Age

1997-98

Age	Level of Vision	PS	PPH	MSB	Total
5-K	Partially sighted	7	0	0	7
	Blind	7	0	2	9
6-11	Partially sighted	103	0	0	103
	Blind	54	0	29	83
12-17	Partially sighted	80	0	0	80
	Blind	71	0	56	127
18-21	Partially sighted	8	1	0	9
	Blind	2	0	21	23
	Totals	332	1	108	441

1998-99

Age	Level of Vision	PS	PPH	MSB	Total
5-K	Partially sighted	6	0	0	6
	Blind	3	0	1	4
6-11	Partially sighted	117	2	0	119
	Blind	60	2	25	87
12-17	Partially sighted	85	0	0	85
	Blind	70	0	59	129

18-21	Partially sighted	6	0	0	6
	Blind	14	0	27	41
	Totals	361	4	113	447

1999-00

Age	Level of Vision	PS	PPH	MSB	Total
5-K	Partially sighted	4	0	0	4
	Blind	4	2	1	7
6-11	Partially sighted	82	1	3	86
	Blind	70	1	16	87
12-17	Partially sighted	75	0	22	97
	Blind	69	1	42	112
18-21	Partially sighted	2	2	7	9
	Blind	6	0	17	23
	Totals	312	7	108	425

Source: DESE Core Data, IDEA Childcount

During the three-year period, the number of students with blindness as their primary disability was greatest during the 1998-99 school year. The table reflects there were more students with blindness as a primary disability during each year of the period than students for whom partial sightedness was the primary disability. The majority of Missouri resident students with blindness are educated in public school districts; however, a significant number are also educated at MSB that provides day schooling and residential services. The reader may also refer to Figure 1 found later in this report that reflects the IDEA childcount of both partially sighted and blind students by county.

In addition to this count source, another called the APH Registry is also taken which is of blind persons of any age who are enrolled in organized education programs is below college

level. It does not require that the visual disability be the primary disability as is the case with the IDEA childcount, or that the persons be identified under IDEA as disabled. During 1999, this count enumerated 930 blind persons; the largest single report coming from the State Schools for Severely Handicapped.

B. Students and Learning Medium Used

Of the students classified as blind in the APH Registry, 104 primarily used Braille in their studies and 49 used it to some extent. Table 2 depicts the primary learning medium for students during the last six school years. It appears that most blind students who read use their residual vision and a lesser number use Braille.

Table 2 indicates that MSB reported 36 students as non-readers. These are generally students attending a multihandicapped program at MSB who, in addition to having a visual impairment, also have other significant disabilities. However, all these students have been reported as having a primary visual impairment on the IDEA childcount.

Table 2. Students by Type of Learning Medium Used

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Public Schools			
Auditory Sources	7	8	13
Braille	62	66	71
Non-Reader	236	237	236
Pre-Reader	116	128	145
Visual	261	253	240
Total:	682	692	705
MSB			
Auditory Sources	0	0	0
Braille	19	23	29
Non-Reader	19	19	34
Pre-Reader	20	19	12
Visual	37	32	32
Total:	95	93	107

Private/Parochial**Schools**

Auditory Sources	0	0	0
Braille	1	1	1
Non-Reader	10	10	7
Pre-Reader	112	144	127
Visual	3	4	5
Total:	126	159	140
Grand Total:	903	944	952

1997-98**1998-99****1999-00****Public Schools**

Auditory Sources	13	6	12
Braille	80	84	79
Non-Reader	234	228	232
Pre-Reader	146	144	130
Visual	232	223	217
Total:	705	685	670

MSB

Auditory Sources	1	1	20
Braille	28	35	23
Non-Reader	38	39	36
Pre-Reader	7	5	0

Visual	23	26	22
Total:	97	106	101
Private/Parochial			
Schools			
Auditory Sources	0	0	0
Braille	2	1	2
Non-Reader	7	8	8
Pre-Reader	140	157	145
Visual	3	4	4
Total:	152	170	159
Grand Total:	954	961	930

Source: APH Registry (Categories used are those of this count process.)

Note: The term pre-reader means a student who is working at a reading readiness level, non-reader means the student appears to exhibit no meaningful reading potential and visual means the student uses print to some extent.

Table 3 reflects the proportion of students by primary learning medium used.

Table 3. Students by Primary Learning Medium

	1994- 95	1995- 96	1996- 97	1997- 98	1998- 99	1999- 2000
Braille	9%	9%	10%	11%	12%	11%**
Visual	33%	30%	29%	27%	26%	26%
Auditory Sources	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	3%
Pre-Reader	27%	30%	30%	31%	32%	29%
Non-Reader	29%	28%	29%	29%	28%	29%

Source: APH Registry

** There were 49 additional students who used Braille as a secondary medium. If these were included the percentage would increase to 16 percent.

The percentage of pre- and non-readers has remained fairly constant over the six years reported. However the use of Braille has shown a slight increase.

Table 4 reflects the primary learning medium used by students by grade during the 1999-00 school year.

Table 4. Type of Learning Medium Used by Grade in the 1999-2000 School Year

Grade	Total
Pre-K	230
K	32
1 – 3	83
4 – 6	104
7 – 12	193
Ungraded	288
Totals	930

	Braille		Visual		Auditory	
Grade	#	%	#	%	#	%
Pre-K						
K	5	15%	9	28%	1	3%
1 – 3	26	31%	33	40%	3	4%
4 – 6	27	26%	57	55%	2	2%
7 – 12	40	21%	122	63%	10	5%
Ungraded	6	2%	22	8%	16	5%
Totals	104		243		32	

	Pre-reader		Non-reader	
Grade	#	%	#	%

Pre-K	230*	100%		
K	11	34%	6	19%
1 – 3	9	11%	12	14%
4 – 6	7	7%	11	10%
7 – 12	6	3%	15	8%
Ungraded	12	4%	232	80%
Totals	275		276	

Source: 1/3/00 APH Registry

*All students in infant and pre-school programs are reported as pre-readers

It appears that the proportion of students using principally Braille compared with those using residual vision is somewhat comparable in grades 1-3. However, the data indicate there is a shift away from Braille to the visual medium as students advance in school.

Students with visual impairments may be provided accommodations when they participate in assessments, including the MAP. Table 5 reflects the accommodations and the number of students utilizing such during administration of the MAP in the spring of 2000.

Table 5. Blind and Partially Sighted Student MAP Accommodations

Accommodation	# Students	Percentage
Computer/word processor	1	0%
Giving response orally	17	6%
Dictation to a scribe	35	12%
Student taped response	1	0%
Use of braille	34	12%
Use of calculator	19	6%
Other	189 *	64%
Total	296	

Source: DESE MAP data, spring 2000 administration.

* This category includes many types of unique and/or multiple accommodations used by particular students.

Two hundred ninety six (296) blind and partially sighted students participated in the MAP during the 1999-2000 school year; 284 took all three parts of the test and scored sufficiently to have their results reported with statewide totals. Of those whose results were reported, 12 percent recorded responses using a braille, 12 percent dictated their answers and 6 percent gave responses orally.

The method of administration of an assessment instrument demonstrates the learning medium used by the SVI being assessed. Table 6 reflects the learning medium used by students taking the MAP during the 1999-2000 school year.

Table 6. Learning Medium Used by Blind and Partially Sighted Students for MAP Assessment

Learning Medium Used in Assessment	# Students	Percentage
Braille edition	49	17%
Large print edition	79	27%
Magnifying equipment	4	1%
Oral reading	98	33%
Audiotaped administration	4	1%
Other	62 *	21%
Total	296	

Source: DESE MAP data, spring 2000 administration

* This category includes many types of unique and/or multiple accommodations used by particular students.

The Braille edition of the MAP was used by 17 percent of the 284 students who scored sufficiently to have their results reported with statewide totals; 33 percent used oral reading and 27 percent used the large print edition.

C. Achievement of Students with Visual Impairments

Tables 7 through 11 report the performance results for students who took the tests that comprise the MAP. The achievement levels defined for the MAP range from "Step 1" through "Advanced". Definitions for these levels are available from the DESE web site. There is considerable variation in the achievement levels reported for partially sighted and blind students in these tables. One variable contributing to this variation is the small number of students whose results are reported at each grade level, e.g., it is possible for scores from one or two students to cause significant differences in the percentages among achievement levels and from year to year.

Table 7. Missouri Assessment Program Scores for Math

Grade Level: 4th Grade

Non- Disabled			
Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
Advanced	5.26%	6.4%	8.03%
Proficient	26.55%	28.9%	28.69%
Nearing Proficient	43.05%	42.6%	40.98%
Progressing	21.53%	18.9%	19.33%
Step 1	3.61%	3.2%	2.96%
Total # Students	65,338	68,404	69,542
Partially sighted			
Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
Advanced	0	0	0
Proficient	0	25%	12.50%
Nearing Proficient	47.83%	20%	43.75%
Progressing	39.13%	30%	31.25%

Step 1	13.04%	25%	12.50%
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Total # Students	23	20	16
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Blind

Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
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Advanced	0	9%	0
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Proficient	0	18%	11.11%
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Nearing Proficient	22.22%	45%	33.33%
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Progressing	33.33%	27%	44.44%
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Step 1	44.44%	0	11.11%
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Total # Students	9	11	9
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Grade Level: 8th Grade

Non- Disabled

Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
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Advanced	1.08%	0.6%	1.24%
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Proficient	11.51%	9.7%	12.82%
Nearing	27.78%	29.1%	28.84%
Proficient			
Progressing	35.37%	38.1%	34.14%
Step 1	24.26%	22.4%	22.97%
Total # Students	62,952	67,220	67,510

Partially sighted

Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
Advanced	0	0	0
Proficient	13.33%	0	0
Nearing	20.00%	0	9.09%
Proficient			
Progressing	40.00%	45%	9.09%
Step 1	26.67%	55%	81.82%
Total # Students	15	11	11

Blind

Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
Advanced	0	0	0
Proficient	0	0	0
Nearing Proficient	0	13%	15.38%
Progressing	50.00%	13%	7.69%
Step 1	50.00%	75%	61.54%
Total # Students	4	8	13

Grade Level: 10th Grade

Non- Disabled

Achievement Level	1998	1999	2000
Advanced	.18%	0.2%	.42%
Proficient	8.77%	9.2%	9.92%
Nearing Proficient	28.03%	28.4%	29.62%
Progressing	35.28%	34.4%	33.7%

Step 1	29.74%	27.5%	26.24%
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Total #	54,744	59,439	59,977
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Students

Partially sighted

Achievement	1998	1999	2000
Level			

Advanced	0	0	0
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Proficient	17%	7.70%	0
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Nearing	17%	15.40%	8.33%
Proficient			

Progressing	50%	53.80%	33.33%
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Step 1	17%	23.10%	58.33%
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Total #	6	13	12
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Students

Blind

Achievement	1998	1999	2000
Level			

Advanced	0	0	0
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Proficient	0	0	0
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Nearing	0	17%	0
Proficient			
Progressing	0	50%	12.50%
Step 1	100%	33%	87.50%
Total #	3	6	16
Students			

Source: DESE MAP Data

Note: 1999 data reflect the combination of partially sighted and blind students as reported in 1999 DESE Blind Literacy Report

Table 8. Missouri Assessment Program Scores for Communication Arts

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	1.23%	1.62%	0	0	0	0
Proficient	27.59%	30.1%	8%	13.33%	25%	20.00%
Nearing Proficient	39.20%	38.17%	42%	20.00%	38%	20.00%
Progressing	22.38%	21.34%	33%	33.33%	13%	30.00%
Step 1	9.60%	8.78%	17%	33.33%	25%	30.00%
Total # Students	68,726	69,633	12	15	8	10

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Non- Disabled	Partially	Blind
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Achievement Level	sighted					
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	2.43%	3.09%	0	0	0	0
Proficient	2.43%	29.19%	20%	6.25%	25%	0
Nearing Proficient	30.51%	29.93%	10%	25%	13%	14.29%
Progressing	22.14%	21.85%	10%	25%	63%	57.14%
Step 1	16.88%	15.94%	60%	43.75%	0	28.57%
Total # Students	67,547	66,684	10	16	8	7

Grade Level: 11th Grade

Achievement Level	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	1.24%	.99%	0	00	0	0
Proficient	22.40%	21.79%	0	40%	20%	0
Nearing Proficient	37.93%	38.4%	27%	20%	20%	28.57%
Progressing	18.53%	19.59%	18%	0	20%	14.29%
Step 1	20.16%	19.23%	55%	40%	40%	57.14%
Total # Students	50,498	53.316	11	6	5	14

Source: DESE MAP data

Note: 1999 data reflect the combination of partially sighted and blind as reported in 1999 DESE Blind Literacy Report

Table 9 reports the 2000 Reading Proficiency Scores for the general population, partially sighted and blind students. The score is a combined reading score from the Missouri Show-Me Standards Communications Arts Standard 2 (reading and evaluating fiction,

poetry and drama) and 3 (reading and evaluating nonfiction works and materials such as biographies, newspapers and technical manuals). There were so few students whose scores were reported that no meaning should be extrapolated from these results.

Table 9. Reading Proficiency 1999-2000 School Year

Non- Disabled

Grade	No. of Students	% Proficient
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3	69,633	33.45%
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7	66,684	33.91%
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Partially sighted

Grade	No. of Students	% Proficient
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3	1	10%
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7	0	0
----------	---	---

Blind

Grade	No. of Students	% Proficient
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3	4	26.67%
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7	4	25%
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Source: DESE MAP data 11/10/2000

Table 10. Missouri Assessment Program Scores for Social Studies

Grade Level: 4th Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Achievement Level						
Advanced	5.40%	14.2%	8%	0	13%	12.50%

Proficient	20.57%	33.5%	17%	17.65%	25%	0
Nearing Proficient	36.44%	30.11%	25%	11.76%	50%	50.00%
Progressing	27.21%	22.98%	42%	41.18%	13%	12.50%
Step 1	10.36%	9.2%	8%	29.41%	0%	25.00%
Total # Students	52,902	69,425	4	17	8	8

Grade Level: 8th Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	8.72%	14.01%	0	11.11%	0	33.33%
Proficient	27.70%	28.31%	11%	22.22%	13%	8.33%
Nearing Proficient	28.94%	26.34%	44%	0	13%	25.00%
Progressing	15.88%	13.6%	0	22.22%	0	8.33%
Step 1	.18.76%	17.74%	44%	44.44%	75%	25.00%
Total # Students	51,732	67,358	9	9	8	12

Grade Level: 11th Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	4.00%	6.27%	0	16.67%	0	0
Proficient	10.04%	10.42%	0	16.67%	20%	0
Nearing	40.31%	38.55%	14%	33.33%	20%	21.43%

Proficient

Progressing	20.37%	20.24%	43%	16.67%	0	14.29%
Step 1	25.30%	24.57%	43%	16.67%	60%	64.29%
Total # Students	38,475	54,105	7	6	5	14

Source: DESE MAP data

Note: 1999 data reflect the combination of partially sighted and blind as reported in 1999 DESE Blind Literacy Report

Table 11. Missouri Assessment Program Scores for Science

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	3.75%	9.93%	0	0	0	0
Proficient	30.98%	34.97%	8%	7.69%	17%	40%
Nearing Proficient	43.75%	36.56%	36%	30.77%	42%	20%
Progressing	16.00%	13.35%	36%	23.08%	25%	40%
Step 1	5.50%	5.19%	9%	38.46%	17%	0
Total # Students	69,194	69,912	11	13	12	10

Grade Level: 7th Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	1.90%	2.49%	0	0	0%	0
Proficient	12.60%	12.78%	13%	5.56%	11%	12.50%

Nearing Proficient	25.60%	25.43%	38%	27.78%	11%	0
Progressing	38.90%	39.44%	0	50.00%	22%	0
Step 1	21.00%	19.85%	50%	16.67%	56	87.50%
Total # Students	67,555	67,095	8	19	9	8

Grade Level: 10th Grade

	Non- Disabled		Partially sighted		Blind	
Achievement Level	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Advanced	0.54%	1.12%	0	0	0	0
Proficient	4.98%	4.73%	0	0	0	0
Nearing Proficient	42.50%	37.98%	17%	20%	33%	6.67%
Progressing	37.21%	37.71%	67%	60%	67%	40.00%
Step 1	15.77%	18.46%	173%	20%	0	53.33%
Total # Students	59,012	59,921	6	10	6	15

Source: DESE MAP data

Note: 1999 data reflect the combination of partially sighted and blind as reported in 1999 DESE Blind Literacy Report

D. Educational Placement of Students with Visual Impairments

During the 1999-00 school year, 74% (316 students) of students with visual impairments were educated in public school settings.

Table 12 displays the number of students participating in the various educational service delivery models for the past three school years. Students are classified as partially sighted (PS) or blind (B).

Table 12. Educational Placements

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
5-K	Reg class or CWC			
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	4	2	6
	Reg class, parallel curr			
	Res/itin	2	2	4
	Self contained	1	3	4
	Separate private schl			
	Separate public schl			
	Homebound or hospital			
	Private residential			
	Separate state school ***		2	2
	Public residential			

1998-99

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
5-K	Reg class or CWC	1		1

Reg class, reg class w/ mod	5	1	6
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Reg class, parallel curr			
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Res/itin		1	1
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Self contained		1	1
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Separate private schl			
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Separate public schl			
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Homebound or hospital			
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Private residential			
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Separate state school ***		1	1
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Public residential			
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1999-00

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
5-K	Reg class or CWC	1	1	2
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	2	1	3
	Reg class, parallel curr			

Res/itin	2	2
Self contained	1	1
Separate private schl	2	2
Separate public schl		
Homebound or hospital		
Private residential		
Separate state school ***	1	1
Public residential		

1997-98

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
6-11	Reg class or CWC	6	1	7
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	49	17	66
	Reg class, parallel curr		1	1
	Res/itin	37	23	60
	Self contained	11	11	22
	Separate private schl			
	Separate public schl		1	1

Homebound or
hospital

Private residential

Separate state school ***	29	29
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Public residential

1998-99

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
6-11	Reg class or CWC	1	1	2
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	83	24	107
	Reg class, parallel curr	14	1	15
	Res/itin	11	19	30
	Self contained	7	14	21
	Separate private schl	2		2
	Separate public schl	1	1	2
	Homebound or hospital		2	2
	Private residential			
	Separate state school ***		25	25
	Public residential			

1999-00

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
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6-11	Reg class or CWC	1	2	3
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	65	39	104
	Reg class, parallel curr			
	Res/itin	11	21	32
	Self contained	5	8	14
	Separate private schl	1		1
	Separate public schl			
	Homebound or hospital		1	1
	Private residential			
	Separate state school ***	3	16	19
	Public residential			

1997-98

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
12-17	Reg class or CWC			
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	51	25	76
	Reg class, parallel curr		2	2
	Res/itin	25	31	56
	Self contained	4	12	16

Separate private
schl

Separate public
schl

1

1

Homebound or
hospital

Private residential

Separate state
school ***

56

56

Public residential

1998-98

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
12-17	Reg class or CWC	6		6
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	57	38	95
	Reg class, parallel curr	3	4	7
	Res/itin	18	14	32
	Self contained	1	13	14
	Separate private schl			
	Separate public schl		1	1
	Homebound or hospital			
	Private residential			
	Separate state school ***		59	59

Public residential

1999-00

Age	Type of Placement	PS	B	Tot
12-17	Reg class or CWC	7	1	8
	Reg class, reg class w/ mod	51	42	93
	Reg class, parallel curr		1	1
	Res/itin	14	19	33
	Self contained	3	5	8
	Separate private schl			
	Separate public schl		1	1
	Homebound or hospital		1	1
	Private residential			
	Separate state school ***	22	42	64
	Public residential			

1997-98

Age		PS	B	Total
18-21	Reg Class-CWC	1		1
	Reg Class-Reg Curr with Mod	1		1
	Reg Class-Parallel			

Curr

Resource/Itinerant	6	2	8
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Self-Contained

**Separate Private
School**

**Separate Public
School**

Homebound/Hospital	1		1
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Private Residential

Separate State School ***		21	21
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Public Residential

Grand Totals:	199	242	441
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1998-99

Age	PS	B	Total
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18 - 21	Reg Class-CWC		
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	Reg Class-Reg Curr with Mod	4	4	8
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**Reg Class-Parallel
Curr**

Resource/Itinerant	1	4	5
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Self-Contained	1	6	7
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**Separate Private
School**

Separate Public School			2
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Homebound/Hospital

Private Residential

Separate State School ***	27	27
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Public Residential

Grand Totals:	216	261	477
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1999-00

Age	PS	B	Total
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18- 21	Reg Class-CWC		
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Reg Class-Reg Curr with Mod	2	2	4
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Reg Class-Parallel Curr			
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Resource/Itinerant		2	2
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Self-Contained		2	2
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Separate Private School			
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Separate Public School			3
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Homebound/Hospital

Private Residential

Separate State School ***	7	17	24
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Public Residential

Grand Totals:	196	229	425
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Source: DESE Core Data, IDEA Childcount Placement Information

E. Reasons Students with Visual Impairments Leave School

To determine educational program effectiveness, it is beneficial to look at reasons SVI leave their respective education programs. Table 13 shows the various reasons for the school years listed.

Table 13. Reason for SVI Leaving School by Student Age

	1997-98				
	14	15	16	17	18
Returned to Reg. Ed.	0	2	0	1	0
Graduated w Diploma	0	0	0	1	10
Graduated w Certificate	0	0	0	0	0
Reached Max Age	0	0	0	0	0
Died	0	0	0	0	0
Moved, known continuing	0	0	1	1	0
Moved, not known continuing	0	0	0	0	1
Dropped Out	0	0	4	2	3
Totals	0	2	5	5	14

	1997-98				
	19	20	21	22+	Tot
Returned to Reg. Ed.	0	0	0	0	3
Graduated w Diploma	4	0	0	0	15
Graduated w Certificate	0	0	0	0	0
Reached Max Age	0	0	0	0	0

Died	0	0	0	0	0
Moved, known continuing	0	0	0	0	2
Moved, not known continuing	0	0	0	0	1
Dropped Out	1	0	0	0	10
Totals	5	0	0	0	31

1998-99

	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22+	Tot
Returned to Reg. Ed.	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Graduated w Diploma	0	0	0	5	17	10	2	5	1	40
Graduated w Certificate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reached Max Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Died	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moved, known continuing	2	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	11
Moved, not known continuing	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Dropped Out	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Totals	6	5	11	10	18	11	2	5	1	69

1999-00

	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22+	Tot
Returned to Reg. Ed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated w Diploma	0	0	0	4	10	5	2	8	0	29
Graduated w Certificate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reached Max Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Died	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moved, known continuing	5	4	2	4	4	1	0	0	0	20
Moved, not known continuing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dropped Out	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	5	5	2	8	15	6	2	8	0	51

Source: DESE Core Data

Table 14 reports the graduation rates for SVI as compared to students without disabilities.

Table 14. State Graduation Rates for Students in Academic Programs

School Year	All Students		Visually Impaired	
	# Grad.	%	# Grad.	%
1996-1997	---	75.25%**	11	64.7%
1997-1998	---	76.35%**	15	48.4%
1998-1999	---	77.60%**	40	57.9%

Source: DESE Core Data, IDEA Childcount Exit Information

** Source: 1999 Blindness Literacy Study. Data include public, MSB, private/parochial/home school.

The drop out rate for SVI has decreased during the past three years. The vast majority of students leaving school are either graduating with diplomas or moving but known to be continuing their education.

F. Transition Status of Students with Visual Impairments

During 2000, 54 students with visual impairments were referred by their school districts to RSB. Table 15 shows the number of students referred by geographic region of the state. One hundred thirty five students (135), ages 14-19, were provided transition services by RSB from January 1, 2000 through October 23, 2000.

Table 15. Referrals From Public Schools to RSB

RSB District Office	Number of Students
Southwest	5
Southeast	3
Kansas City North	10
Kansas City South	16
Mid-Missouri	7
St. Louis North	8
St. Louis South	5
Total	54

Source: Rehabilitation Services for the Blind January 1 – October 23, 2000

H. Teachers Certified to Instruct Students With Visual Impairments

Table 16 depicts the number of people residing in the state who hold valid Missouri certification to teach blind and partially sighted students. There are 84 teachers employed in Missouri public schools who live in Missouri and have valid certification to teach students who are blind and partially sighted. These data indicate there are 22 persons living in MO who are appropriately certificated but who are not employed in public schools.

There are several differences between Table 16 and Figure 1: Table 16 refers to 1999-00 information, while Figure 1 refers to 1998-99 information; Table 16 reflects MO teachers employed in MO schools, while Figure 1 counts teachers regardless of their origin state, etc. The two sources though do indicate the relative number of teachers with VI

certification and their general location relative to SVI.

Table 16. Missouri Residents with Certification as Teachers of the Blind and Partially Sighted

	1999-2000
Holding Missouri Certification	264
Living in Missouri	109
Retired	3
Employed in Missouri Public Schools	84

Source: DESE FY99 Core Data, 10/21/00 DESE Teacher Certification Report

V. Findings and Conclusions

Documenting the number of eligible students, e.g., those who are blind, continues to be challenging. There are a number of counts taken annually of children in the state who have some level of visual impairment. One of these is the IDEA childcount. It reflects students, ages 5 to 21, enrolled in public school whose primary disability is either blindness or partial sightedness. In the IDEA count taken December 1999, 229 students were identified as blind and another 196 were reported as partially sighted. The IDEA count does not reflect as blind students for whom a visual impairment is not the primary disability. Another count of blind students, called the APH Registry, is also taken annually in conjunction with the American Printing House for the Blind and MSB. It is a count of persons of all ages throughout Missouri who are blind and enrolled in an organized public or private education program below college level. It does not require that a student be identified as disabled under IDEA or that blindness be the primary disability. The 1999 count of students by this method was 930. It has not been possible to account for the differences between these two counts in order to arrive at a documented number of eligible students according to the statutory definition.

Of the total population of blind and partially sighted students, a relatively small proportion use Braille as their primary learning medium. Most use their residual vision for reading and writing. Further, the use of Braille for reading appears to decline markedly as students advance through the grades. The majority of children enumerated in the APH Registry were reported as non- or pre-readers without specification of their eventual likelihood of using residual vision or learning Braille for communication arts.

The documentation of achievement of blind and visually impaired students via the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) continues to be under review as the Brailled and large print versions of tests and instructions for their administration is improved. At present, the number of students for whom results are reported is not large enough from which to draw broad conclusions regarding achievement across the content areas assessed.

Data of the educational placement of students in public schools for whom a visual impairment is the primary disability reflects that most students between the ages of 5 to 17 are educated in the regular classroom and therein, are provided various instructional accommodations. Lesser but significant numbers are educated via state operated school

placement, resource/itinerant services and self-contained classes, in that order.

Students with visual impairments reported on the IDEA Childcount and who leave school do so principally by graduating or moving and enrolling in another school. Very few are indicated to leave school without a diploma or drop out.

The Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides transition services for school-aged students with visual impairments. During 1999-00, RSB provided transition services to 135 students in Missouri, most of who originated in the Kansas City area.

At present, there are between 84 and 101 certificated teachers of the blind and visually impaired employed in Missouri's public schools. In some cases, teachers must travel considerable distances in order to provide services for SVI.

VI. Recommendations

1. The two counts presently taken of students with visual impairments, ages 5 to 21, should be reconciled periodically and enhancements should be considered which would provide discrete counts of students who are blind and blind with other disabilities.
2. Study is needed of the process applied by schools to select the learning media used for the instruction of blind students and the preparedness of educators to provide instruction using these learning media
3. Current achievement information provided by the MAP is of limited use in describing differences in achievement between blind and non-blind students. Additional methods may be needed in order to document the academic and vocational performance of blind students.
4. Study is needed to better understand the reason(s) students, as they advance in age, appear to reduce their use of Braille.
5. Missouri's APH Registry should incorporate the collection of two additional data elements: a) of Braille-reading blind students, do they receive Braille instruction currently and do they receive materials in Braille and Braille-related services and b) blind students using slate and stylus or other Braille writing devices.

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